

## May Diversity Spotlight: Older Americans Month

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Roughly **10,000 Baby Boomers** will turn **65** today, and about **10,000** more will cross that threshold every day for the next 19 years until 2036. There are 75 million baby boomers who are on the verge of retirement. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of people age 65 to 84 in the U.S. grew by 3.3 million. While 13 percent of Americans are currently age 65 or older, that proportion will jump to 18 percent by 2030. The current 40 million senior citizens will balloon to 89 million by 2050.

Additionally, the Baby Boomer group appears to be healthier, wealthier, and prepared to live a longer life than at any point in history. How will this group impact the future? Immediately, one must consider the vast number and significant impact this will have when they leave the workforce. Who will fill the positions behind this group? Medical care will need to change to meet the demands of the aging baby boomer population. Fashion designers and marketers of products may want to survey and solicit this group for their future needs.

It is expected an estimated **10 million baby boomers** will develop Alzheimer's. Of those who reach the age of 85, nearly one in two will get it. And because there is currently no way to prevent, cure or even slow the progression of the disease, every one of these **10 million baby boomers** will either die with Alzheimer's, or from it.

Sometimes those older Americans whose spouses or partners are either in a nursing home, assisted living center, dementia care center or Alzheimer's unit are the ones who are forgotten. They struggle to meet their daily calorie intake, lead a social life outside of the care of their loved one, or their own mental health takes a turn for the worse. The Older Americans Act was enacted in 1965 to be sure certain essential services were provided to older Americans. The eligibility age is 60 years. Many states, however, target individuals with the greatest economic and social needs and pay particular attention to those with low-incomes and live in rural areas. Approximately 3 million people receive Title III services which include meals, family caregiver support, adult day care, transportation, and health promotion according to a study conducted in 2010.

When I turned 60 years old approximately two years ago, I thought "I have a lot to do in a short period of time. I will be 80 before you know it." Let's not be naïve and think that we are not aging and soon to be part of the group of older Americans. Plan now to exercise and eat well. Plan now to prepare and train someone in your office or organization to take your position, or someone else's. Make a succession plan for your position. Consider all the places you want to visit and go! Take a look at long-term health care insurance policies for you and your spouse or partner. I drew up my will and end-of-life plan as well as my funeral service when I was in my 40s. Don't let time slip away!

### Resources:

U.S. News; *The Baby Boomer Number Game*, <http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/on-retirement/2012/03/23/the-baby-boomer-number-game>

"Generation Alzheimer's – Alzheimer's Association"  
[act.alz.org/site/DocServer/ALZ\\_BoomersReport.pdf?docID=521](http://act.alz.org/site/DocServer/ALZ_BoomersReport.pdf?docID=521)

"Marketing to Baby Boomers"

<http://info.4imprint.com/wp-content/uploads/1P-19-1013-Marketing-to-Baby-Boomers2.pdf>

"The Older Americans Act," [http://www.aoa.gov/AoA\\_Programs/OAA/Index.aspx](http://www.aoa.gov/AoA_Programs/OAA/Index.aspx)

"The Older Americans Act, Insight on the Issues 92," AARP Public Policy Institute (May 2014)

[http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/public\\_policy\\_institute/health/2014/the-older-americans-act-AARP-ppi-health.pdf](http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/public_policy_institute/health/2014/the-older-americans-act-AARP-ppi-health.pdf)

"Older Americans Month," <http://oam.acl.gov>